



BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Business Partnerships Report – July 26, 2013

Section 1: Town Centre

EARLY MORNING RESTRICTION ORDER

The consultation on the proposed Early Morning Restriction Order (EMRO) in Blackpool town centre officially closes on Thursday 25 July.

Since the consultation exercise was launched on June 13, there has been extensive discussion within the business community with both the Blackpool Business Leadership Group and the Town Centre BID canvassing the views of members.

The proposed EMRO would prohibit the sale of alcohol between the hours of 3am and 6am, Monday to Sunday, in a designated area of the town centre (see map above).



It is aimed at addressing recurring problems within the town centre such as high levels of alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour that is not directly attributable to specific premises.

The areas affected (all or part of) are: Queen Street/Queen Square; Springfield Road; Promenade (between New Bonny Street and Banks Street); Bank Hey Street; Market Street; Dickson Road; Talbot Road; West Street; Corporation Street; Abingdon Street; The Strand.

A total of 24 premises in this area currently have the ability to sell alcohol after 3am.

The results of the consultation will be reported back to the Licensing Committee on September 4/5 when a final decision will be taken.

TALBOT GATEWAY

The new highways layout for the Talbot Gateway Central Business District scheme is now operational.

Although parts of the area still look incomplete, this is because a number of footways are yet to be finished. However, there is now full access for traffic on Dickson Road, Springfield Road, High Street, Cookson Street and Talbot Road.

The new layout means significant changes to the highways network.

The main traffic route through the Talbot Gateway Central Business District area will be via Cookson Street, George Street and Buchanan Street for eastbound traffic and vice versa for westbound traffic.

The Talbot Road Bus Station car park, which has been closed for extensive refurbishment, is now expected to re-open late August/early September.



The £220 million Talbot Gateway scheme, being created in conjunction with the council's development partner, Muse Developments, will create new retail, commercial and community space for Blackpool in addition to town centre parking and transport facilities. This also includes a new public square, Council offices, restaurants, retail units and a new Sainsbury's supermarket.

Construction work is well underway (see picture above) and expected to be completed in full by summer 2014.

BRILLIANCE

The Brilliance sound and lightshow in Birley Street has been switched off for the summer for refurbishment. It will be re-launched at the start of the Illuminations with a new programme of shows.

TOWN TEAM WALKABOUTS

Town centre “walkabouts” undertaken by the Town Team have resulted in a number of improvements to public realm and retail frontages.

Various lamp posts, cycle racks and items of street furniture have been refurbished and almost 300 gullies cleared out.

The Council’s enforcement team has also contacted the owners of more than 20 retail units around Bank Hey Street, Church Street, Clifton Street, Topping Street and Talbot Road to get improvement works carried out to shop frontages and canopies.

A scheme has also been devised to improve the appearance of Bank Hey Street where utilities work and the removal of some items of street furniture has left unsightly patches of tarmac within the block paving.

The entire stretch of pavement between Boots and Adelaide Street will be re-laid during August. Work will be carried out in sections to minimise any disruption to shops.

PUBWATCH SCHEME WINS NATIONAL AWARD

Blackpool’s Pubwatch scheme won the top award at the Diageo National Pubwatch Awards held in London on July 10.

The scheme was praised for its impressive range of responsible drinking initiatives and clear commitment to working with partners throughout the local community.

Section 2: Enterprise & Funding Opportunities

AID FOR CENTRAL STATION SITE

Blackpool is one of five areas to pilot a new public/private partnership to get infrastructure projects off the ground.

As part of the new Local Infrastructure Demonstrator Partnership, private sector individuals are to work alongside Government partners to identify and overcome problems which have been hindering infrastructure projects.

In Blackpool’s case, the work relates to the potential development of the former Central Station site as a major leisure attraction. Blackpool was represented at an event in London to set out the issues that could hinder the development.

The private sector-led teams comprise representatives from the Civil Engineering Contractors Association, Royal Town Planning Institute and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, with other senior public and private sector partners also making significant contributions.

Funding is also being provided through the Construction Industry Training Board to develop the partnership.

100 DAY CHALLENGE

A plan to create and fill 100 apprenticeships in 100 days is to be launched by Blackpool Council and the National Apprenticeships Service. It will run between July 31 and November 8.

Various training providers and businesses are already on board and ready to commit to a number of apprenticeship opportunities.

The campaign will launch with a special event at The Hilton at 5.30pm on July 31, where businesses, training providers, apprentices and council officers will talk about the need for apprenticeships and the importance of the campaign.

World Cup winner Sir Geoff Hurst, who grew up as an apprentice himself, will be the guest speaker. If you would like a ticket to the event, please email apprenticeships@blackpool.gov.uk or contact Andy Stone from the National Apprenticeship Service on 07776 498581.

During the 100 days, The Gazette will run weekly articles on companies that have created apprenticeships, as well as focusing on the young people who have filled them.

EMPLOYER OWNERSHIP OF SKILLS FUND

A final decision on the bid to establish a Blackpool Tourism Academy is expected before the end of July.

The UK Commission for Employment & Skills has already indicated that Round Two of the pilot scheme is massively over-subscribed with more than 300 bids being received and only a small proportion likely to be awarded funding.

The bids were considered by an Investment Board in early July and its recommendations then put before Ministers in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Education. Successful applicants will be notified before the July 31 deadline.

Blackpool's £2m bid has been submitted by a consortium of local employers including Merlin, Pleasure Beach, Blackpool Transport, Sandcastle, Cuerden Leisure and Blackpool Zoo, with support from Blackpool Council, Blackpool & The Fylde College and Marketing Blackpool.

It seeks to develop a new skills academy for the visitor economy – the Blackpool Tourism Academy – to enable co-ordinated provision of training across several leading employers.

It will also encourage hundreds of small to medium enterprises within the resort to adopt the internationally-recognised World Host customer service standard as a minimum threshold.

The academy will develop a new tourism apprenticeship scheme with a target of more than 120 apprenticeships over a two year period.

Using the World Host suite of customer service programmes, more than 6,000 training places will be delivered if the bid is successful.

Section 3: Visitor Economy

BLACKPOOL SHOWCASED

Blackpool is being showcased to overseas air passengers in a combined effort by Marketing Blackpool and CityWing to entice more business and leisure tourists to the town.

A specially-commissioned video has been made highlighting Blackpool's offering and Isle of Man-based flight operator Citywing is playing it in-flight to all passengers.

CityWing operates out of Blackpool, Newcastle, Cardiff, Gloucestershire and RAF Valley, flying overseas to Belfast, Isle of Man and Jersey.

The video can be downloaded at www.visitblackpool.com/business

ILLUMINATIONS SWITCH ON

Celebrity broadcaster Jonathan Ross will switch on this year's Blackpool Illuminations.

Jonathan, who is a regular visitor to Blackpool with his family, will be the official star of the 2013 Illuminations switch-on weekend on Friday 30 August.

He will turn on the lights following a full live concert by The Script, who are headlining the first switch-on night concert to be held on the Tower Festival Headland.

The Script, fronted by The Voice judge Danny O' Donoghue, have sold millions of albums and are currently on a world tour that takes in 52 arenas and 14 festivals. They will be supported in Blackpool by Eliza Dolittle.

The change in format for this year's event means that for the first time the celebrations will be spread over two days and the switch on-concert will be a paid-for event.

Tickets for the Friday night event, priced £34, are now on general sale. VIP packages priced at £75 are available by calling 01253-478209

THE SCRIPT
★ Plus Special Guest ★
ELIZA DOOLITTLE

BLACKPOOL ILLUMINATIONS
Switch-On ← CONCERT →

FRIDAY 30 AUGUST ★ 6.00 PM* TOWER FESTIVAL HEADLAND BLACKPOOL

SEETICKETS.COM 0871 230 10940 ticketmaster.co.uk
GIGSANDTOURS.COM 0844 811 0051 OR VISITBLACKPOOL TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE 01253 478222

* GATES OPEN AT 4PM WWW.VISITBLACKPOOL.COM/SWITCHON

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO BOOK ACCOMMODATION GO TO
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FOR VIP PACKAGES CALL 01253 478209
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Full Live Performance

Book Your Tickets Now

If any businesses require copies of the concert poster for display in their premises (as shown above), please email me at philip.welsh@blackpool.gov.uk

The headline act for the Saturday night concert is expected to be announced soon.

Section 4: General Information

SHALE GAS DEVELOPMENTS

A number of developments have been announced in recent weeks in relation to shale gas “fracking”. These include:

- A British Geological Survey found there may be 1,300 trillion cubic feet of shale gas present in the north of England. The figure is double previous estimates
- Centrica plc has become a 25% investment partner in the Lancashire Bowland shale gas exploration licence area operated by Cuadrilla Resources
- Cuadrilla has announced that it intends to apply for planning consent to hydraulically fracture and test the shale at its existing exploration well at Grange Hill near Singleton, as well as at up to six new temporary well site locations on the Fylde over the next 18 months. These new locations have not yet been announced. A decision on the existing Anna’s Road site has been deferred until later on in the exploration programme
- The Government has welcomed a package of community benefits brought forward by the shale gas industry. Companies have pledged to engage with communities early (prior to any application for planning permission), and to provide community benefits in areas where shale is commercially extracted. These will include £100,000 for communities situated near each exploratory (hydraulically fracked) well, and 1% of revenues from every production site.
- Cuadrilla has announced the appointment of planning consultants, Arup, to carry out Environmental Impact Assessments in support of planning applications for the sites where it intends to drill, hydraulically fracture and test the flow of gas.
- The Government has launched new guidelines on the planning and permitting regime for shale gas developments to make the process for approving developments clearer and more streamlined. The Treasury has also begun a consultation on tax incentives to encourage exploration of shale gas areas.

BLACKPOOL TO LONDON RAIL LINK

The decision by Network Rail not to allow Virgin Trains to reinstate the Blackpool to London direct rail link has been challenged.

A letter from the Blackpool Business Leadership Group was sent to the Office of Rail Regulation, protesting at the decision. This was followed by the presentation of a 5,000-strong petition compiled by The Gazette.

Richard Price, chief executive of the ORR, has promised that the petition and the comments from the business community will be considered as part of his review of Network Rail’s decision, as will Virgin’s own submission.

He has also written a detailed response to the BBLG – a copy of which is being circulated under separate cover. In this letter, he talks about the “tension” between introducing additional services on the West Coast Main Line and delivering existing services on time. Mr Price states that he is hopeful of reaching a decision by late September.

MAYORAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

The first of the Mayoral business networking meetings held on June 18 attracted around 40 businesses. The two-hour session was hosted by the Mayor of Blackpool, Cllr Eddie Collett, who gave a brief introduction on his plans to use his mayoral year to help local businesses as well as raise funds for his two charities, the Snow Heights (outdoor centre) Appeal and the Civil Liberties Trust.

It is intended to stage a second event in early September. Invitations will be sent out to businesses once the date has been agreed.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR FORMER DWP SITE

Plans have been lodged to turn a former Department for Work and Pensions site in St Annes into a £55m housing and supermarket complex.

The regeneration scheme around Heyhouses Lane will be led by Worthington Properties and comprise 162 houses, a Booths food store, pub, village green and retirement home.

Hollinwood Homes, which is Worthington Properties' residential development arm, will build 30 of the houses with the remainder taken on by Cheshire-based Morris Homes.

The 18.3-acre site was sold to Worthington Properties by Telereal Trillium earlier this year for £9.5m and came with outline planning consent for the development.

Philip Welsh
Head of Partnerships & Business Development